(4) The lead agency may conduct technical discussions involving PRPs and the public. These technical discussions may be held separately from, but contemporaneously with, the negotiations/settlement discussions.

(5) In addition, the following provisions specifically apply to enforcement actions:

(i) Lead agencies entering into an enforcement agreement with de minimis parties under CERCLA section 122(g) or cost recovery settlements under section 122(h) shall publish a notice of the proposed agreement in the Federal Register at least 30 days before the agreement becomes final, as required by section 122(i). The notice must identify the name of the facility and the parties to the proposed agreement and must allow an opportunity for comment and consideration of comments; and

(ii) Where the enforcement agreement is embodied in a consent decree, public notice and opportunity for public comment shall be provided in accordance with 28 CFR 50.7.

(d) *Remedial investigation.*

(1) The purpose of the remedial investigation (RI) is to collect data necessary to adequately characterize the site for the purpose of developing and evaluating effective remedial alternatives. To characterize the site, the lead agency shall, as appropriate, conduct field investigations, including treatability studies, and conduct a baseline risk assessment. The RI provides information to assess the risks to human health and the environment and to support the development, evaluation, and selection of appropriate response alternatives. Site characterization may be conducted in one or more phases to focus sampling efforts and increase the efficiency of the investigation. Because estimates of actual or potential exposures and associated impacts on human and environmental receptors may be refined throughout the phases of the RI as new information is obtained, site characterization activities should be fully integrated with the development and evaluation of alternatives in the feasibility study. Bench- or pilot-scale treatability studies shall be conducted, when appropriate and practicable, to provide additional data for the detailed analysis and to support engineering design of remedial alternatives.

(2) The lead agency shall characterize the nature of and threat posed by the hazardous substances and hazardous materials and gather data necessary to assess the extent to which the release poses a threat to human health or the environment or to support the analysis and design of potential response actions by conducting, as appropriate, field investigations to assess the following factors:

(i) Physical characteristics of the site, including important surface features, soils, geology, hydrogeology, meteorology, and ecology;

(ii) Characteristics or classifications of air, surface water, and ground water;

(iii) The general characteristics of the waste, including quantities, state, concentration, toxicity, propensity to bioaccumulate, persistence, and mobility;

(iv) The extent to which the source can be adequately identified and characterized;

(v) Actual and potential exposure pathways through environmental media;

(vi) Actual and potential exposure routes, for example, inhalation and ingestion; and

(vii) Other factors, such as sensitive populations, that pertain to the characterization of the site or support the analysis of potential remedial action alternatives.

(3) The lead and support agency shall identify their respective potential ARARs related to the location of and contaminants at the site in a timely manner. The lead and support agencies may also, as appropriate, identify other pertinent advisories, criteria, or guidance in a timely manner (see §300.400(g)(3)).

(4) Using the data developed under paragraphs (d)(1) and (2) of this section, the lead agency shall conduct a site-specific baseline risk assessment to characterize the current and potential threats to human health and the environment that may be posed by contaminants migrating to ground water or surface water, releasing to air, leaching through soil, remaining in the soil, and bioaccumulating in the food chain. The results of the baseline risk assessment will help establish acceptable exposure levels for use in developing remedial alternatives in the FS, as described in paragraph (e) of this section.

(e) *Feasibility study.*

(1) The primary objective of the feasibility study (FS) is to ensure that appropriate remedial alternatives are developed and evaluated such that relevant information concerning the remedial action options can be presented to a decision-maker and an appropriate remedy selected. The lead agency may develop a feasibility study to address a specific site problem or the entire site. The development and evaluation of alternatives shall reflect the scope and complexity of the remedial action under consideration and the site problems being addressed. Development of alternatives shall be fully integrated with the site characterization activities of the remedial investigation described in paragraph (d) of this section. The lead agency shall include an alternatives screening step, when needed, to select a reasonable number of alternatives for detailed analysis.

(2) Alternatives shall be developed that protect human health and the environment by recycling waste or by eliminating, reducing, and/or controlling risks posed through each pathway by a site. The number and type of alternatives to be analyzed shall be determined at each site, taking into account the scope, characteristics, and complexity of the site problem that is being addressed. In developing and, as appropriate, screening the alternatives, the lead agency shall:

(i) Establish remedial action objectives specifying contaminants and media of concern, potential exposure pathways, and remediation goals. Initially, preliminary remediation goals are developed based on readily available information, such as chemical-specific ARARs or other reliable information. Preliminary remediation goals should be modified, as necessary, as more information becomes available during the RI/FS. Final remediation goals will be determined when the remedy is selected. Remediation goals shall establish acceptable exposure levels that are protective of human health and the environment and shall be developed by considering the following:

(A) Applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements under federal environmental or state environmental or facility siting laws, if available, and the following factors:

(*1*) For systemic toxicants, acceptable exposure levels shall represent concentration levels to which the human population, including sensitive subgroups, may be exposed without adverse effect during a lifetime or part of a lifetime, incorporating an adequate margin of safety;

(*2*) For known or suspected carcinogens, acceptable exposure levels are generally concentration levels that represent an excess upper bound lifetime cancer risk to an individual of between $10^{-4}$and 10^{-6}using information on the relationship between dose and response. The 10^{-6}risk level shall be used as the point of departure for determining remediation goals for alternatives when ARARs are not available or are not sufficiently protective because of the presence of multiple contaminants at a site or multiple pathways of exposure;

(*3*) Factors related to technical limitations such as detection/quantification limits for contaminants;

(*4*) Factors related to uncertainty; and

(*5*) Other pertinent information.

(B) Maximum contaminant level goals (MCLGs), established under the Safe Drinking Water Act, that are set at levels above zero, shall be attained by remedial actions for ground or surface waters that are current or potential sources of drinking water, where the MCLGs are relevant and appropriate under the circumstances of the release based on the factors in §300.400(g)(2). If an MCLG is determined not to be relevant and appropriate, the corresponding maximum contaminant level (MCL) shall be attained where relevant and appropriate to the circumstances of the release.

(C) Where the MCLG for a contaminant has been set at a level of zero, the MCL promulgated for that contaminant under the Safe Drinking Water Act shall be attained by remedial actions for ground or surface waters that are current or potential sources of drinking water, where the MCL is relevant and appropriate under the circumstances of the release based on the factors in §300.400(g)(2).

(D) In cases involving multiple contaminants or pathways where attainment of chemical-specific ARARs will result in cumulative risk in excess of 10^{-4}, criteria in paragraph (e)(2)(i)(A) of this section may also be considered when determining the cleanup level to be attained.

(E) Water quality criteria established under sections 303 or 304 of the Clean Water Act shall be attained where relevant and appropriate under the circumstances of the release.

(F) An alternate concentration limit (ACL) may be established in accordance with CERCLA section 121(d)(2)(B)(ii).

(G) Environmental evaluations shall be performed to assess threats to the environment, especially sensitive habitats and critical habitats of species protected under the Endangered Species Act.

(ii) Identify and evaluate potentially suitable technologies, including innovative technologies;

(iii) Assemble suitable technologies into alternative remedial actions.

(3) For source control actions, the lead agency shall develop, as appropriate:

(i) A range of alternatives in which treatment that reduces the toxicity, mobility, or volume of the hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants is a principal element. As appropriate, this range shall include an alternative that removes or destroys hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants to the maximum extent feasible, eliminating or minimizing, to the degree possible, the need for long-term management. The lead agency also shall develop, as appropriate, other alternatives which, at a minimum, treat the principal threats posed by the site but vary in the degree of treatment employed and the quantities and characteristics of the treatment residuals and untreated waste that must be managed; and